



Christina Rehklau  
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February 18, 2025

Re: SB 179 Relating to landowner immunity

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

On behalf of Visit Corvallis, I express our strong support for SB 179, which aims to make permanent the changes to landowner immunity laws enacted in 2024. This bill is crucial for the continued development and maintenance of recreational trails across Oregon. Visit Corvallis represents and supports the tourism and outdoor industry in Benton County. Our community partners and Visit Corvallis are invested in the future of Oregon's natural resources and the legal structures that support their use and enjoyment.

Recreational immunity is a cornerstone of our state's commitment to the outdoors. Protecting landowners from certain liabilities allows more people to enjoy Oregon's natural beauty without fear of undue legal repercussions. This protection is critical not only for landowners' safety and peace of mind but also in fostering a culture of shared responsibility and respect between them and the recreating public.

Tourism is supported by recreational immunity as it encourages the creation and maintenance of trails and recreational spaces. For instance, the Corvallis-to-the-Sea Trail, among Oregon's signature trails supported by Visit Corvallis, would not be feasible without this legal assurance. Trails like these are not just paths through the wilderness; they are economic lifelines to the communities they touch, bringing in visitors and supporting local businesses. The significance of recreational immunity hit home for me as I consider the future of the Corvallis-to-the-Sea Trail, which spans 60 miles and involves multiple landowners. As an Oregonian proud of our state's lush landscapes and dedication to environmental conservation, seeing this trail come to fruition was a poignant testament to what we can achieve when landowner liability concerns are abated. The trail has become a beacon for hikers, cyclists, and tourists, all while fostering sustainable economic growth – a living example of the symbiotic relationship between law, land, and livelihood.

Finally, regarding potential amendments that could strengthen and enhance the bill's apparent intent, please consider the following points.

- Extend the increased level of immunity in Section 1 of the bill to private landowners who open their land to the public free of charge.
- Clarify more strongly that trails that serve dual purpose as both recreation and transportation facilities are covered under the law; to address the problem of subjective intent.



- Include broader language like "conveyance" rather than the specific trail activities like walking, biking, and running currently spelled out in the "includes but is not limited to" recreational activities list.

Visit Corvallis strongly supports Senate Bill 179. If you have any questions, please contact me at 541-757-1544 or [christina@visitcorvallis.com](mailto:christina@visitcorvallis.com). Thank you for your service and commitment to preserving Oregon's outdoor recreation industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christina Beckhaus".

Visit Corvallis  
Executive Director